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FROM

REVOLUTIONARY PARIS

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REVOLUTIONARY PARIS

SKETCHED DURING THE FIRST PHASE OF THE
REVOLUTION OF 1848

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IN TWO VOLUMES

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PICTURES

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REVOLUTIONARY PARIS.


CHAPTER I.

THE CONSPIRACY AND REVOLUTION OF THE 16TH OF APRIL.

Alarm occasioned by the Blanqui manifesto, and fears of an approaching convulsion—Conspiracy of the Ultras—New monster meeting in the Champ de Mars—The monster procession of the working classes—Fears and conflicting counsels of the moderate members of the government—The national guards at last summoned, with the garde mobile—Demonstration of the national guards—Revolutionary scenes on the quays and the Place de l'Hôtel de Ville—Angry feeling between parties—Scenes on the Boulevards—The cry raised against the Communists—Divisions of opinion among the working classes—Attack upon the house of Cabet, the communist—Troubled state of the public mind—Continued fears of the government—Tumultuous state of the city—Arrests and counter-arrests—Caussidière and Sobrier again appear upon the scene—The confusion increases.

CITIZEN BLANQUI, when in his manifesto of defiance, addressed to the moderate party in the Provisional Government, he declared that “the

gauntlet was thrown down, and the death-struggle at hand," was fully prepared to follow up this vague menace, and to translate word into deed by a *coup de main*. He had temporised with the Provisional Government to the last, in the hopes of being admitted to his share of place and power; he had even transmitted to its members revelations of the schemes of the ultra party for its dissolution; but, disappointed in the results of all his underhand dealings, he now combined with the leaders of the other ultra clubs, to forward the designs of the ultra minority of the government, in attempting the overthrow of the moderate majority—hoping, in the success of this new revolution, to find his own share of those splintered morsels of power, which so many hands in republican France were stretched forth to seize. From the moment of the appearance of the Blanqui manifesto, the whole city was in a state of subdued ferment. It was soon well known that a conspiracy was on foot for the overthrow of the government, or rather for its re-modelling, by the exclusion of the moderate members, and the admixture of such men as Barbès, Blanqui, Sobrier, and Cabet, the chiefs among the people of the ultra-democratic principles and socialist doctrines, along with those already in power, Messieurs Ledru-Rollin, Flocon, Louis Blanc, and Albert,—if conspiracy can be called this attempt of a party to seize, by means of a new convulsion and a *coup*



de main, the reins of that power which a less violent party had seized by means of a prior convulsion, and by a surprise of the whole nation, but just before, and thus only to imitate the example set before them—if conspiracy can be called the avowal of such designs, so openly expressed in the face of all Paris that no one who had his eyes and ears at his free service could doubt of the results about to ensue. Against the legitimacy of the designs of the ultra party, according to the new theories of “legitimacy of revolution,” it has still to be objected, however, that the sense of the majority of the country, and even the sense of the far greater majority of revolutionary Paris itself, was notably and notoriously against the accession of a party whose principles were dreaded and abhorred,—although the same objection, by the way, might have been made to the legitimate possession of the government by those who held its reins, and to the legitimacy of the republic itself.

Whatever the name to be given, however, to the designs, and the coming subversive attempt of the ultra party—be it conspiracy, or party struggle, or revolution, or no matter what, when all ancient terms, and feelings, and principles, and opinions, had been already so utterly revolutionised in their meanings by the doctrine of the revolutionising right of the sovereign will of the people, and when every tumultuous demonstration of a large mob, no

matter how organised, had been accepted as legitimate proof of that sovereign will—whatever the disputed title, and the disputed right, it was very clear, during the days preceding Sunday the 16th of April, that a violent collision between the moderate and ultra parties was imminent. The time also was arrived for a new revolution : in revolutionary Paris, a revolution once a month was the least that could be expected. The 16th and 17th of March had witnessed the revolution which overthrew the power and the *prestige* of the national guards, and gave evidence of the force of the ultra party, and the army of mob to be roused at its beck ; the Ides of April had now arrived ; the 15th May was still in the womb of a revolutionising future ; and dark fate had still the outbreak of June in store. No ! a revolution once a-month was the least that could be expected, in a state of things in which constant revolution was naturally to be considered as the normal state of a revolutionary government. Various reports, then, were current in Paris as to the approaching collision ; they circulated from mouth to mouth. A new monster manifestation was announced in favour of a further adjournment of the general elections, and against the admission of the military into the city, upon the occasion of the great *fête* of fraternisation between all the several bodies of the nation, civil or military, which had been announced as shortly

about to take place, with true republican typical and emblematic pomp and effusion of sentiment. The pretext for the movement did not matter much ; under the circumstances, one outcry was as good as another to rouse a demonstration, which might be swelled to an insurrection, and serve the purposes of revolution : what were not afterwards the vain cries, put forward more or less vainly, to serve as a pretext, and to aid a purpose ?

It soon became generally known that, on that same Sunday, another monster meeting of the working classes, and of the organised bands of the *ateliers nationaux*, was to be held upon the Champ de Mars, and that this assemblage, whatever the protestation and the denial, had been instigated by two members of the government, Messrs Louis Blanc and Albert, the newly self-appointed friends, allies, and chiefs, of these same working classes. They had openly convoked a meeting of their acolytes of the Luxembourg, in the great arena of the Hippodrome, just without the barriers of Paris, and close at hand to combine with any movement of the monster demonstration in the Champ de Mars. How far Ledru-Rollin, as well-known chief of the ultra party in the government, was the aider and abettor of his popular colleagues in their designs, remained alone a matter of doubt and speculation : he was supposed, at that time, to waver between the influence of the temporising conciliation-policy of

Lamartine, and the desire of a furtherance of his own more ultra-democratic views by the overthrow of his moderate colleagues. At all events, the intention of the ultra party in the clubs to profit by the movement of this manifestation, in order to dissolve by a *coup de main* and by force if necessary, the existing government of the Hotel de Ville, and secure their own advent to power, was never doubted. It was rumoured abroad, on the evening of Saturday, that it was the intention of the members of the majority of the government to retreat to the Palace of the Tuileries, and there fortify their position against the invasion and attack of the ultra party. In truth, they were in a state of consternation, and knew not on whom or on what to rely, in order to maintain, and preserve from the grasp of a new revolution, that power which they had profited by another revolution to snatch into their own. The alarm was general,—in the government for itself—in the public, from the combined fear of fresh convulsions and of the success of a party that threatened destruction to all property, and perhaps a renewal of the scenes of the fatal “’93.”

Such was the state of things on the morning of Sunday, the 16th April. By the hour of noon, the vast arena of the Champ de Mars, the great theatre of so many revolutionary scenes in the past and the present, exhibited once more one of its mighty

scenes of popular commotion. The aspect of the fermenting crowd assembled on that plain was of that exciting and imposing nature which every vast conglomeration of agitated men cannot fail to produce. Delegates of all the trades and guilds in Paris were assembled, and again to the amount of a monstrous army; the broken and wallowing masses filled the greater part of the space even of that immense arena. Banners were raised aloft at confused and irregular points about the plain, dotting the air with bright patches of colour, and waving in every direction over the troubled masses of heads. Here and there thick encircling knots were formed in denser masses; and in them forms of haranguing and gesticulating men were seen raised above the crowd. Shouts of acclamation, and promises and threats, issued in heavy bursts of roaring sound from the mouths of their encircling auditors. The high sloping banks, which line two sides of the huge oblong plain, and which had been removed to a greater distance from the centre by the public labourers, in preparation for those brilliant *fêtes* with which the glorious republic was in future to do homage to its own future glories, were covered also with similar confused knots, or with those myriads of curious spectators who never fail, on any occasion of popular commotion, to hurry to the "show," in excitable and sight-loving Paris. Lines of agitated forms and moving heads occu-

pied the sloping sides of this species of oblong amphitheatre. Among the various pretexts put forward among the people for the assemblage of this monster demonstration, it was difficult to ascertain the real cause; or rather it became more and more clear that all were really mere pretexts! One of the ostensible objects appeared to be the election, from among the working classes, of fourteen officers, left for their own selection upon new republican principle, in the staff of the national guards. Other motives, however, were also assigned—such as the choice of candidates among the people themselves, for representatives to be proposed in the general elections; or various deputations to the government, upon various matters connected with the endless affair of the “organisation of labour.” Among all these confused explanations of the movement, none wore the stamp of the real truth: such reasons were given only to the uninitiated among the mighty mass of men. Perhaps, after all, the greater part of the meeting had no other objects in view, and were to be made the instrument of the designing acolytes of the clubs. They were perhaps merely to be led up to the scene of action, there truly to combine in the genuine movement, and to be employed to overawe, and crush, and sweep away in one tumultuous uproar, the members of the government, obnoxious to the so-called popular party. They were perhaps to be only the dupes, as afterwards,

under another form, and with another popular outcry, so many of the deluded people were the dupes again. It may be that the intrigues of the ultra party had been openly avowed only to the chosen few, or comparative few. When sufficient agitation was supposed to have been communicated to the fermenting and excited crowd, the monster-march had to be directed towards the point of attack—the Hôtel de Ville. Chiefs marshalled the bands, with well-organised system of command, into that regular marching order which practice now communicated to the people's movements: no army could have been led on to battle in more orderly array. It was a curious sight to see the mass obey their leaders, dissolve, re-unite, form into deep rank and long, long row! The vanguard swept out of the plain by one of its upper gates: on, and on, and on, followed one battalion of the people upon another: more than an hour elapsed before the last had left the Champ de Mars. The monster-procession was in movement towards the Hôtel de Ville! Along the outer Boulevards, along the esplanade of the Invalides, over the Pont de la Concorde, and along the lengthy vista of the quays it moved on—flexible, but continuous in its long thick mass, like a huge serpent hirsute with tri-color bristles. The head of the monster appeared to have nearly reached its destination before the last joint of its tail had fully left the Champ de Mars.

The danger to the government was imminent; and, before men's eyes, it advanced nearer and nearer.

The danger, indeed, was imminent. Consternation and confusion prevailed in the counsels of the disunited Provisional Government—mistrustful of itself, mistrustful of those alone who could prove its supporters, mistrustful of all around it. Sometimes in one of the public offices of the different *ministères*, sometimes in another, but not in combined body in the Hôtel de Ville, the moderate party, conspiring for its own safety against open conspiracy, held alarmed consultations upon the course to be pursued. The only defence for the Provisional Government lay in those national guards, to the humiliation of whom, but a month before, they had at all events tacitly contributed. Lamartine is said to have been averse to the convocation of the national guard, with the fear that, if called forth to make a counter-demonstration, it might turn against the very republic itself, and proclaim a regency: in the support of the government, he considered, it was not to be relied upon—it would be fatal to their cause. Marrast and Garnier Pagès, it is supposed, in opposition to their more timorous colleague, strenuously supported the appeal to the national guards as their only means of salvation, preferring even the chances of their defection in favour of a regency to the triumph of the dangerous and deleterious principles of the ultras.

The part played by Ledru-Rollin, on this occasion, appeared full of irresolution and doubt: he seemed yet to be wavering between the party he notoriously favoured, and the colleagues with whom he had as yet carried on the government: upon after occasions he declared that, in the face of the revolution attempted by the ultra party, he was one of the first, and of his own accord, to give orders for the beating of the *rappel* to summon the national guard. Whatever the confused counsels of the moderate members of the Provisional Government, however, or the impulse which led to the course finally adopted, a resolution to fall back upon the only existing means of defence was taken. The *garde mobile*, although yet very doubtful in its character, and suspected to be ever likely to favour a movement of that people from which it had chiefly sprung itself, was commanded out. Orders were given that the *générale*—a summons for the national guard to turn out in arms, as in a time of imminent danger—should be sounded all over Paris.

The national guard, then, “turned out” in full force. It was still, as ever, the representative of the majority of Paris and the country at large. It desired, as the country at large, the maintenance of the “*status quo*,” rather than any new convulsion: it hated the dreaded ultra party; it feared the designs of the communists upon property: it was ready to support the Provisional Government,

as the supporter, in its turn, of the cause of order. Lamartine, then at the head of affairs, had been utterly ignorant of the state of public feeling in this respect, or had been blinded, as so often afterwards, by his fears. The national guard advanced readily to the salvation of the government. It had its own grievances also to avenge: it had never forgotten what it considered its humiliating defeat, upon the occasion of the last monster demonstration of the people: it was eager to come, once more, to an issue with the mob of the ultra party: it had the stains upon its honour, its courage, and its influence, to wipe out: it rejoiced in its heart that an occasion was there to show once more its force, and proclaim its power over the "rabble mob" of the capital. When the *générale* was beaten, the national guards hurried to their appointed places of meeting, with the knowledge that the Provisional Government was in danger from the anarchists of the ultra party; and their columns marched forward upon the Hôtel de Ville, in quick march step, with the cry of "*A bas les anarchistes ! à bas les communistes !*" Up to a late hour of the day they still came on, from the outskirts of Paris even, anxious to retrieve their character, and oppose once more their moral, and, if necessary, physical force to their new enemies, the communists—the friends of the mob, who had only to gain—the phantom-bugbears of those who had aught to lose

in the struggle. The cry "*A bas les communistes!*" was the watchword and rallying-cry of the *bourgeois*, and friends of order, on that memorable day. Up to a late hour they poured on, as quickly as the intense press permitted them, until, when the flood came to a check, and was forced back upon itself, they reached in one long mass, from the Hôtel de Ville, along the quays, through the place de Carrousel, and far down the Rue de Rivoli.

When the monster procession from the Champ de Mars entered upon the quays, shortly after crossing the bridge, it found a counter-revolution opposed to its own. They were lined literally, from one end to the other, by files of the national guards. Other battalions were advancing, continually and steadily, upon the Hôtel de Ville. The monster procession was allowed, however, slowly to press its way forwards; and slowly it advanced, in double current, along with the battalions of the national guards: it seemed surprised and stupified by the force of the armed civic guard displayed against it. The two streams flowed on thus, amidst zealous shouts on the part of the national guards, and murmurs from the army of the demonstration. The two opposing powers—the contending parties—moved on side by side. Again the parties were in presence—strangely! the *bourgeoisie* and the *peuple*; and it was now the middle classes that had been summoned to oppose the "sovereign will." The

tables had been turned. The legions of the young *garde mobile* were marching onwards also to the Hôtel de Ville, to obey the summons of the government. As yet these inexperienced troops knew not the important part they played, or might have yet to play, in the history of the revolution. They knew not what they did at that time, and cried only "*Vive la République!*" but even then they seemed inclined to support the cause of the government: a breath, however, might possibly have turned them on the so-called people's side. Thousands upon thousands of spectators crowded also the long thoroughfare of the quays: thousands upon thousands pushed on towards the scene of action—the stage of the party struggle.

When the head of the monster procession now again reached the Place de l'Hôtel de Ville, it found only a small space left open for its passage. Its leaders—some of whom were now on horseback—endeavoured in vain to thrust back the national guards, in order to make room for the approach of the sovereign people; they were forced to retire, with gloomy looks, from the arena. They saw that their cause was lost again for the time: the effort of the conspiracy had failed. The opposing mass against them was too strong. The *Place* was one sea of bayonets. Cannon had been planted before the façade of the Hôtel de Ville. The imposing show of the force of armed citizens crushed the conspiracy,

and prevented the revolution of the disappointed party.

For many long hours thus remained the vast agitated lake of bayonets upon the Place de l'Hôtel de Ville, new battalions of national guards pouring, as much as possible, into the troubled basin, from all the surrounding inlets of small streets, like lesser streams into the overflowing lake. The delegates of the monster meeting of the working classes were, during that time, received by the members of the Provisional Government, as they were in duty bound to receive delegates. The government was defended now, and feared no longer the incursion of the mob, the convulsion, and the overthrow. Delegates of the national guards were received, also, with their protestations and assurances. From time to time, when the members of the government appeared at the windows of the building, shouts that rent the air burst forth from the mouths of the guards: it was their triumph now. Caps, hats, chakos, képys, and every other variety of military *coiffure*, were suddenly thrust aloft into the air upon every bayonet-point, like a forest of head-coverings suddenly springing up from the earth: again and again was this singular scene repeated, so strange and picturesque in the great popular picture. From the people none now responded, "*Vive le Gouvernement Provisoire!*" When Citizen Louis Blanc, or Citizen Albert, however, appeared at the windows,

looking grimly, but with studied countenances may be, upon their disappointed confederates and allies, voices there were which cried, "*Vive Albert! —Vive Louis Blanc!—Vivent les vrais amis du peuple!*" Singular, indeed, although confused and blurred, was the picture in its wonderful aspect! Around and about the *Place*, during those long hours, the ferment was intense among the surrounding crowd. Men of the people were in an angry and excited state. They declared that the innocent and calumniated working classes, with their innocent and calumniated demonstration, were insulted by this counter-demonstration of the national guards; that the national guards were the enemies of the people; and that the people must once more rise in arms against them. Against the moderates rose the cry of "*Réactionnaires*" and "*Faux républicains*:" it was met with the counter-cry of "*Anarchie*" and "*Communisme*." The *bourgeoisie* and the people were again in moral conflict. At every moment angry parties among the spectators appeared to be coming to blows: hustling and thrusting took place; but the collision was not for that day.

The day of revolution went by without the strife—that was still to come—of civil battle hand to hand. The national guards had now carried off their bloodless victory in this new struggle between parties. The moderate party in the government may be said

to have also had, that day, their triumph in the display of the power of the better-thinking citizens, as had their factious colleagues in the demonstration of their mob: they had raised, almost in spite of themselves, a force, and a most commanding one, to show that they also had an army at their beck. The day of revolution went by; General Courtais, not then suspected of treachery to the government, rode up and down among the national guards, as they poured in, declaring that the government needed them no longer—that all danger was gone by. But in spite of these assurances of their commander, the *chefs de battalions*, on the dispersal of their civic troops, when at last the invading tide flowed away from the Place de l'Hôtel de Ville, failed not to give the significant order, "Tomorrow morning, at six o'clock, under arms!"

The curtain thus dropped upon the second act of the party struggle between the moderates and the ultras. But men knew that the drama was not terminated yet; they knew that the overwhelming display of the armed force might overawe the ultra-violent party for a time, and check its designs; but they guessed that, however wild beasts might be cowed for a season, they were not to be subdued without chains; and they asked, "When are we to have act the third?" At latest, they supposed the great fraternisation *fête* might be looked upon as a signal for a fresh display of party hatred;

but they felt that it might come even still sooner, for the ferment and the alarm continued, although the curtain had fallen over the more stirring scene.

That night along the Boulevards, and throughout the public places of the city, the seething of excitement had reached a higher boiling pitch than ever since the days of February. The main artery of the capital swarmed with the thickening throngs that rolled hither and thither in agitation and disorder. Large patrols of national guards, and of the *garde mobile*, thrust through the crowds as best they might, moving to and fro, in order to quell or overawe the angry spirit of the lower classes, and the evident disposition to outbreak. Those who, in the *improvisés* clubs for declaiming and haranguing, were supposed to be preaching "disorder," were arrested by the excited, zealous, and now triumphant national guards: those who, in these throngs, were suspected only of professing those communist doctrines which were now mixed up in men's minds, and in their words, with the schemes and principles of the ultra republicans—to be severed from them no more in the nicknames of parties—were rudely treated by men of the middle classes, by the gathering *bourgeois*, who now swarmed more boldly forth, by all those, in fact, who wished to demonstrate by act and deed their sympathy with the triumphant party of that day: they were hustled, driven forth, and sometimes were arrested

by zealous citizens not in uniform, although in some cases it might be for their personal protection, so near did they oftentimes appear to being torn in pieces by such as now grew bold and scornful in their moderate opinions. "Reaction! reaction!" began to be more strongly the cry of the maltreated ultras. The reaction, however, which existed at that moment, was only the reaction of a confidence that grew more bold after weeks of fear, humiliation, and constraint, and not, as was declared, the reaction of a party against the principles of the republic itself.

No cry could have been more happily devised to excite a lively demonstration against the subversive and anarchist party than that of "*Communisme*," by which it was attacked. This was a bugbear that excited the apprehensions of all who had aught to lose by the triumph of the principles of a *partage de biens*, and an equalisation of all fortunes, ranks, and capacities. It excited alarm, agitation, scorn, and made men bold against those who were supposed to touch their vital interests most nearly. The name of "*Communistes*," attached to the ultra party and its adherents—the social title, rather than the political designation—was the best calculated then to raise a host of active opponents to all their designs and measures. They cried "*Communiste!*" as they would have cried "*Mad dog!*" The "ill name" was given, and the dog was forthwith morally hung. The moderate

party thought that they had found their salvation in that cry; and truly, for the time, it served their turn, and added a great weight to their scale in the balance of the party struggle. This bugbear name of "*Communiste*," thus popularly applied without distinction to all the *exalté* party, and to all disturbers of the public order, or conspirators against the moderate part of the Provisional Government, had the result also, for the time, of ranging in the ranks of the opposite party and the cause of the moderates a great part of the working classes, which only again seceded and fell back in the further days of increasing misery and more active agency of the ultra-democratic party. The notion of the *égalité des salaires*, which was to put the intelligent and active on the level with the dull and lazy—one of the main principles, at that time, of the socialist and communist theorists—raised a storm, by touching their nearest interests, among those who considered themselves likely to profit by their own activity and intelligence. The cry of "*À bas les communistes!*" then, brought over a great portion of the working classes to "the cause of order," as the cause of the moderates was more or less justly termed. Among these classes, then, there were also divisions, party spirit, and angry feeling. Some remained, it is true, inflated by the declamations of the communist and *exalté* clubs, and breathed only a spirit of mistrust, spoke only

of again taking up arms against *their* bugbear, the fancied *réacteurs*. The majority, however, adopting at that time the confusion of terms which were the watchwords of the day, made as loud and angry demonstration against the ultra party. The writer, among many other artisans of all descriptions with whom he spoke in the republican freedom of those days, stumbled upon a ragged fellow, who, putting his hand into his pocket, pulled out a quantity of cartridges. "Look here, Monsieur," he said; "I have spent my last sou to-day in buying these. I don't know how to handle a rifle, but I'll do my best as soon as I can get one; and these little *bijoux* are for the heads of the first communists I can get a shot at." What the republican *bulletins* of M. Ledru-Rollin insisted then, in spite of his own principles of republican equality, on calling *castes*, no longer held together at that hour. "People" was against "People." What, men asked, was to be the result? How soon was the civil war of angry declamation and dispute to turn into the civil war of angry blows and resistance by deadly weapon?

One of the first results of this violent so-called "reactionary" burst of public feeling, was an attack made, on the evening of the demonstration, upon the house of Cabet, the self-appointed high-priest of communism, by an inflated party of the national guards. There was every reason to suppose that

the man of extravagant utopian theories was no accomplice, at least in any active political schemes for the overthrow of the existing government. But the cry raised had affixed, above all, odium upon the man who put himself forward as the chief preacher and prophet of the doctrines which were soon so closely connected with those schemes. It was with difficulty that the domicile of Cabet could be guarded that night, or his person protected from outrage, by some of the more reasonable and less excitable of the national guards; and this overstrained ebullition of angry passion did, from that moment, much injury to the cause of the moderate party, by affixing to the national guards, *en masse*, and thus to the *bourgeoisie*, denounced by the clubs as an "infamous, bloody, and aristocratic band of murderous capitalists," the stigma of violence, rancour, and injustice. At all events, no proof existed, at that time, of the complicity of Cabet in the subversive attempt. The fact has been mentioned as giving a measure of the excited public feeling. Of course, also, several houses were illuminated, on the night of that famous Sunday, in different parts of Paris; but this habit, the habit of fear, had become so general during those revolutionary months, upon the slightest symptom of a popular demonstration, that it could scarcely then be taken as the evidence of any real feeling whatever.

During all the days that immediately followed the